



Superintendent's Update

December 23, 2015

Dear Shrewsbury Families,

As we head into the last week of 2015, I want to express my gratitude. When I visit classrooms and attend various performances and competitions, it is clear that our students are thriving. This could not happen without both the efforts of dedicated, caring educators and support staff and strong support from home. Thank you for providing your children with the expectations, encouragement, and unconditional love that build the foundation for their success in school and for their future well being.

I hope that all of you who recently celebrated Hanukkah had a wonderful holiday, and I wish all of you who will be celebrating this week a very merry Christmas with family and friends. I also hope that all of you enjoy a healthy and prosperous 2016!

Please read on for several informational items of interest, including information on (dare I say it?) weather cancellations and delays, as well as this year's recipients of the John P. Collins Awards for Excellence. As always, thank you for your continued support of our schools.

Respectfully,

Joe Sawyer
Superintendent of Schools

Informational items:

- 1) A four letter word...S-N-O-W
- 2) John P. Collins Award recipients
- 3) College acceptance season
- 4) Student successes
- 5) The Shrewsbury School Journal is online
- 6) Year end giving to the Colonial Fund

1) A four letter word...:

After last winter, S-N-O-W has become a censored word in my home (it doesn't help that my wife is from Texas...). While I've been holding off in an attempt to avoid jinxing us, I do need to remind families of our procedures regarding school cancellations and delays. Please click [here](#)

to review this information. This year, in addition to an automated phone call and email, no school/delay announcements will also include text messages. Texts will be sent to those who have included up to two numbers for this in the [PowerSchool Parent Portal](#) and who replied to a test text in order to opt in. If you haven't activated this feature and wish to do so, you may enter the numbers to receive texts in the "demographics update" section in PowerSchool and then text the word Yes to 68453. Finally, this year's no school announcement will include a guest appearance by the Lowy family, who won the bid to help record the no school automated message at last spring's Garden Party fundraiser, so listen all the way through if you get a "no school" phone call. Hopefully I won't be making many this year!

2) John P. Collins Award for Excellence Recipients:

The Shrewsbury Education Foundation [recently announced this year's recipients of the prestigious John P. Collins Award for Excellence](#), which are named after former superintendent of schools and Shrewsbury resident Dr. John P. Collins. Congratulations to the following individuals, who will be celebrated at the [SEF's annual recognition dinner](#) on January 23 at Cyprian Keyes Golf Club:

Support staff:

Litza Rivera, Instructional Technology Support Specialist, Sherwood Middle School

Paraprofessional staff:

Ann Marie Lockwood, Instructional Aide, Oak Middle School

Cathy Shaw, Instructional Aide, Sherwood Middle School

Professional staff:

Susan Conley, Instructional Coach/Curriculum Coordinator, Coolidge School

Elin Dolen, Grade 7 Science Teacher, Oak Middle School

Michael Lapomardo, Music Teacher, Shrewsbury High School

Brian Liporto, Music Teacher, Shrewsbury High School/Sherwood Middle School

Leadership:

Mary Beth Banios, Assistant Superintendent

Greg Nevader, Assistant Principal, Shrewsbury High School

Congratulations to these outstanding staff members, and thank you to SEF for honoring excellence in our schools!

3) College acceptance season:

Many of our SHS seniors have recently received admissions decisions from various colleges and universities. Inevitably, some are elated and others are disappointed. The School Counseling Department at SHS does an excellent job helping students and families navigate the process of looking for the right fit and the right value for this important life decision, and students should reach out to their school counselor as needed. Frank Bruni, a New York Times columnist, has written extensively on this topic, and I think seniors and their families may be interested in two of his columns on this topic from the past year, one on what he calls the ["college admissions madness"](#) and another on ["how to measure the value of a college"](#). Mr.

Bruni's take on this topic is best summarized by the title of his recent book: "Where you go is not who you'll be."

4) Student successes:

Our students continue to excel in so many ways, and I'm pleased to share just a few recent examples. The Performing Arts Department held multiple holiday concerts at Oak and SHS where our students' musical talent shined, while the SHS and Oak fall plays and the Sherwood musical showcased outstanding theatrical abilities; the SHS Speech & Debate team won the overall championship for the second year in a row at the prestigious Holly Speech Festival at Natick High School; our Middle School Lego Robotics program had multiple teams win awards at a recent tournament in Northboro; and the SHS Girls Crew First Varsity Boat won the Massachusetts Public School Championship, while the Cheerleading team and the Boys Cross Country team won league championships. More importantly, students from elementary through high school have also contributed a great deal to our community through various holiday food, book, and clothing drives. Our students continue to make us proud!

5) The Shrewsbury School Journal is online:

In case you missed it, the [Fall 2015 Edition of the Shrewsbury School Journal](#) is online. Check it out for stories regarding student achievements and testing results, the Student Innovation Team at SHS, new staff hires, this year's Superintendent's Award winners, and more.

6) Year end giving to the Colonial Fund:

I'm sure many of you, like me, will make some charitable donations prior to the end of the calendar year. While there are many worthy causes worth supporting, please consider making a gift that will have a direct impact on our own public schools, as we seek to achieve our ambitious goals in order to prepare our students for future success. Please click [here](#) to find out how the Colonial Fund makes a difference for our schools and click [here](#) to make a donation.

Thank you for your continued support of our schools. If I can be of assistance to you, please contact me at 508-841-8400 or at jsawyer@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us.

Happy 2016!

Joe Sawyer

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